

REPORT ON SURRENDER OF ARMS, WESTERN TRANSVAAL.

From Major-General Walter Kitchener, to the Chief of Staff, Army Head-Quarters.

Sir,

Klerksdorp,
14th June, 1902.

The surrender of arms having been completed yesterday in a most loyal spirit throughout the district, I have the honour to submit the following report of the procedure followed; also to attach Reports from Colonel Kekewich and Major Montgomery, who received a portion of the surrenders. Colonel Rochfort's Report from the extreme south-western area has not yet come to hand.

2. Before leaving Vereeniging on 2nd June, I arranged with Assistant Commandant-General Delarey that we should personally, together, visit the Northern Districts while our deputies carried out surrenders in the south. Generals Delarey, Kemp, Celliers, left for the Northern Districts on the 3rd, while I went to Klerksdorp, met Colonel Kekewich and Generals Liebenburg and Du Toit, and arranged for the southern area to be dealt with as under:—

Colonel Kekewich—

Potchefstroom Commando at Hartebeestfontein.
Wolmaranstad Commando at that town.

Colonel Rochfort—

Bloemhof Commando.
Griqualand rebels at Schweizer Reneke.

These surrenders have been satisfactorily carried out, and detailed reports are furnished by the Officers concerned.

3. At Tafel Kop, on 6th June, I received a helio message from General Delarey to say the commandos were assembling, and that the Rustenburg Commando and most of the Krugersdorp and West Pretoria Commandos, the Staats Artillery and Zarps, all of General Kemp's command, would be ready for me at 10 a.m. next day at Doonkom, 15 miles to north.

4. On 7th June, General Delarey met me half way, and accompanied me to Doonkom. We found the commandos assembled below a small kopje, their arms piled in heaps a little distance away. The men were grouped in no military order to hear General Delarey's address, and after being introduced to the officers, I accompanied the General to a commanding buttress of rock. The officers appeared to me to be divisible into two classes. A few, such as Commandant Steenkamp, were grey bearded, tall, typical, "old" Boers, keen-eyed, and shrewd of feature. These were extremely cordial, and, I should judge, genuinely satisfied with the peace. The majority of the officers were younger men of a more foreign, that is, European type. They wore goatbeards, and had a generally alert, soldierlike appearance. They were enthusiastically glad the war was over, and eager to return to their avocations in various towns.

5. General Delarey addressed the men in Dutch, which was translated to me as he went on. He introduced me to the burghers as representing the British authority, and went on: "I now formally hand you over to General Kitchener as British subjects, and I assure him, on your behalf, that you will serve your new Government with the same loyalty you have shown to the late Government."

I then addressed the burghers, and called upon them to formally acknowledge their allegiance, which they did with every demonstration of earnestness. The form of oath used was as follows:—

"I now call upon you formally to testify your allegiance to King Edward the Seventh, his Heirs and Successors. Burghers! You here, in the presence of our God, acknowledge King Edward to be your liege Sovereign, and that you will henceforth maintain his authority throughout the land. So help you God."

To which General Delarey, followed by his burghers, testified their assent.

6. The general feeling of the meeting, and of subsequent meetings, was intense satisfaction at peace having been concluded, and there was a universal, and, in my opinion, sincere expression of loyalty, to their new allegiance.

7. After the meeting the Field-Cornets assembled their men for the issue of rations, writing of names, &c. The arms were loaded on wagons, and the officers came to lunch at the mess tent where the Union Jack was flying. The escort then came off duty and mixed in the most friendly way with the burghers, the Highlanders and their pipes affording evident pleasure.

8. At Doonkom, 1,173 men surrendered, 1,115 rifles, 195 licenses were issued to men to retain their arms, 45 officers, 150 on border farms. These were certified to by General Kemp as men that can be trusted.